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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at New York's Westchester Community College (WCC) to determine the characteristics and preferences of students enrolled in the two 1996 summer sessions. Surveys were sent to 1,271 students from Session I, held from May 13 to June 7, with usable responses received from 64.2% (n=816). An analysis of responses from Session I indicated that 72.3% of the respondents were working; only 6.1% were taking a previously failed course; 73.9% planned on transferring their summer credits; 80.3% stated that they preferred short, intensive courses in the summer; 78.9% preferred classes between 8a.m. and 1p.m.; 28.9% said they learned about WCC summer school from WCC mailings, 26.7% from another student, and 15.7% from a guidance counselor; and 40.7% planned to take more summer courses at WCC. For Session II, held from June 10 to July 12, 974 students were surveyed, with 60.2% (n=586) returning usable questionnaires. Among these respondents, 72.3% were working; only 4.9% were retaking a class they had previously failed; 46.4% preferred to meet 3 times a week for 5 weeks and 38.4% preferred evening classes; 59.6% preferred classes between 8a.m. and 1p.m.; 26.6% learned about WCC summer school from WCC mailings, 30.2% from another student, and 12.3% from a guidance counselor; and 55.6% intended to take another WCC summer course. (HAA)

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ED 401 988

Westchester Community College Summer School Survey, 1996

Session I and Session II

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Summer School Survey 1996

Session I

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Session I

WCC Summer School Survey 1996

Session I, held from May 13 to June 7, is the largest enrolled summer session with 2,719 *activities*, comprising over one-third (35.7%) of the total number of summer school *activities*. Of this, 1,994 *activities*, or almost three-fourths (73.3%), took place at the Valhalla campus, 605 at the White Plains Arts Workshop, and 120 at the Peekskill site. The number of surveys sent was 1,271. Of these, 816 were returned and usable, producing a return rate of 64.2%.

Who Are The Students Attending? Almost three-fourths (72.9%) of the respondents attending Session I consider themselves to be *a WCC student*. A large majority of them are **not** recent high school graduates. Over four-fifths (81.9%) reported graduating from high school before June, 1995.

Almost three-fourths are working (72.3%), and two-fifths reported working full-time (41.8%). One-third (32.5%) reported being enrolled at another college during the fall or spring semester, an apparent contradiction for some who indicated they considered themselves to be *WCC students*. (See Appendix V for the list of colleges they reported attending).

Why Are the Students Attending? Over three-fifths of the students (62.3%) are attending to take a course *now instead of the fall*. Only a small percentage (6.1%) are attending to retake a course they failed at WCC, or retake a course they failed elsewhere (1.7%).

The percentage who were attending WCC for the first time is very small--only 2.7% of the respondents.

Almost three-fourths of the respondents (73.9%) plan to transfer *these credits* to another college. Transferring credits, therefore, may be a more *primary* reason for attending summer school at WCC than *taking a course now instead of in the fall.*

Of those who identified themselves as a *visiting student*, three-fifths (61.0%) reported they had to produce a course description to their college to ensure the transfer of credits. Another 17.0% reported they had to produce both a course description and a syllabus, and 18.3% reported they did not have to produce either. Consistent with a previous question, 70.2 % indicated they were either a *WCC student* (52.7%) or chose to leave the question blank (17.5%).

What Do They Prefer in Terms of the Length of a Session and Classes Per Week? Four-fifths of the Session I respondents (80.3%) stated they preferred a *short, intensive course in the summer.* This preference for a short session is repeated in a follow-up question. Three-fifths (61.8%) preferred to meet *4 or 5 times a week for 4 weeks,* rather than for two to three times a week with longer class periods. Less than a third preferred to meet 3 times a week for five weeks, while under eight percent preferred a class meeting two times a week. Based on the results, therefore, a shorter session, and daily class meetings is the preference.

A third follow-up question asks the respondents their preference in terms of the number of hours a week a class meets in the summer. Only 12.5% preferred to meet for 3 1/2 hours, two times a week. The highest percentage (45.5%) preferred to meet for 1 1/2 hours, four to five times a week. Two-fifths (40.3%), however, preferred to meet 2 1/2 hours, 3 times a week.

When Do They Prefer to Take Classes? In terms of the time of day they prefer to take classes, the afternoon is clearly least desirable. Only 1.6% of the respondents preferred to take a course between 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Early morning classes before 8:00 AM also are undesirable with only 2.6% preferring this time. The greatest percentage prefer to take a class between 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM (46.1%) and 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM (32.8%).

Evening Classes: There is a *market*, however, for evening classes for approximately a fifth of respondents (17.3%).

Saturday Classes: There is also a market for Saturday classes for approximately a fifth of the respondents (17.6%).

Most (91.9%) reported that the course they were taking was *their first choice*, and for the small percentage who did not, slightly over a third (36.0%) reported they *preferred a different time.*

Where Did They Learn About WCC Summer School? The largest percentage of respondents (28.9%) indicated that they had learned about WCC summer school from a WCC post card or a mailed brochure. Another 26.7% reported they learned about summer school from another student, while 15.7% learned it from a guidance counselor at a high school or another college. Only 6.1% learned it from a college or high school newspaper.

Many of these students are our future *customers*. Over two-fifths (40.7%) plan to take more summer courses at WCC. Half (50.6%), however, left the question blank, and 8.7% replied *no,* they did not intend to take another course.

Off-Campus Sites: White Plains and Peekskill

The Preference Is for Longer Sessions and Longer Class Periods: Students attending classes at the off-campus sites in White Plains and Peekskill differ in their preferences for summer school courses when it comes to the length of a class meeting, the length of a session, and the number of times per week a class meets.

In almost a complete reversal of the preferences indicated by Valhalla students, over three-fourths (75.7%) of the White Plains students and over four-fifths (81.4%) of the Peekskill students preferred classes that meet for 3 1/2 hours only two times a week. Less than three percent on either site preferred courses meeting 4 to 5 times a week for four weeks. In a similar follow-up question, 83.8% in White Plains and 76.5% in Peekskill favored classes that met two times a week for 3 1/2 hours as opposed to shorter class periods and more meetings week.

There also is a greater demand for **evening classes** at the off-campus sites. Approximately 30% at both sites expressed a preference for evening classes, while a very small percentage(less than 2% at both sites) preferred classes before 8:00 AM or in the afternoon. About one-fifth of the students at both sites preferred **Saturday** classes.

Their Purpose Is Different: In contrast to the students at the Valhalla campus, a much smaller percentage of students at both sites are attending *to take a course now instead of the fall* (13.2% at White Plains and 25.6% at Peekskill). Virtually none of them are here to retake a course they failed, and very few are taking a class at WCC for the first time. Instead, they give a myriad of reasons for attending, the greatest percentage of which are centered around self enrichment.

They Are Older Students and Working, Too: The off-site students, like the Valhalla students are older students, 83% of whom graduated before 1995; over three-fifths of whom are working full-time or part-time, and approximately four-fifths of whom are **not** enrolled at another college in the fall or spring semesters. A somewhat higher percentage of the Peekskill students (32.6%) intend to transfer their credits to a four-year college than those at White Plains (24.3%), but not nearly to the extent that those on the Valhalla campus do. An important difference between the two off-site campuses occurs, however, in their identification with WCC. Three-fourths (76.7% of the Peekskill students, but only two-fifths (40.4%) of the White Plains Students *consider themselves a WCC student.*

They Are Our Repeat Enrollees: Over half of the White Plains respondents (52.9%) and two-thirds (65.1%) of the Peekskill respondents plan to take more summer courses at WCC, and like those attending summer school at the Valhalla campus, well over a third at both campuses learned about the summer school courses from a post card or a mailed brochure.

SESSION I
Summer School 1996

	On Campus	White Plains	Peekskill	Total
Total Session I Activities 1996	1,994	605	120	2,719*
Percent of Total Summer School Activities				38.7%
Number of Surveys Sent 6/3/96	1,271	288	67	1,626
Number of Surveys Returned and Useable	816	136	43	995
Return Rate	64.2%	47.2%	64.2%	61.2%
Total Session I Classes/Faculty 1996	88 classes	28 faculty	10 faculty	126
Number of Packets Sent 6/3/96	52 classes	14 faculty	5 faculty	71
Number of Packets Returned 6/20/96	45 classes	10 faculty	3 faculty	58

*Total number of activities for the four summer school sessions combined is 7,606.

Note: The Clinical Course in Radiological Technology, which runs all summer long, was deleted from the survey count.

Summer School Survey 1996

Session II

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Session II

WCC Summer School Survey 1996

Session II, held from June 10 to July 12, is the second largest enrolled summer session with 2,469 activities, comprising one-third (32.5%) of the total number of summer school activities (7,606). All of the activities occurred on the Valhalla campus, since no classes are offered during Session II at off-campus sites. The number of surveys sent was 974. Of those, 586 were returned and usable producing a return rate of 60.2%.

Who Are the Students Attending? The students attending Session II differ in an important way from those in Session I. A smaller percentage (56.0%) consider themselves to be *a WCC student* than those in Session I (72.9%). Similarly, over two-fifths (43.3%) of Session II students compared to only one-third (32.5%) in Session I reported being enrolled at another college during the fall or spring semester.

Session II students are similar to Session I students, however, in that almost the same percentage are not recent high school graduates (83.4% graduated before June 1995 compared to 81.9% of Session I students), and almost the same percentage are working while attending college (76.0% of Session II students and 72.3% of Session I students).

Why Are the Students Attending? In percentage terms, their reasons for attending WCC are very similar to those student in Session I. Three-fifths (60.9%) are attending to take a course *now instead of the fall;* only 4.9% are attending to retake a course they failed at WCC, and only 3.6% are here to retake a course they failed elsewhere. As in Session I, the percentage who are attending WCC for the first time is very small (3.9%). Moreover, nearly the same percentage of Session II students intend to transfer their credits to another college (71.8%) as Session I students (73.9%).

Similar to Session I students, over half (54.6%) of those who identified themselves as a *visiting student* in Session II, reported having to produce a course description to their college to ensure the transfer of credits; 17.0% reported having to produce both a course description and a syllabus; 18.3% reported having to produce neither.

What Do They Prefer in Terms of the Length of a Session and Classes per Week? A much smaller percentage of Session II students prefer to meet 4 or 5 times a week for 4 weeks (36.9%) than Session I students (61.8%). Conversely, almost a half (46.6%) prefer to meet 3 times a week for five weeks compared to only 28.9% of the Session I students.

A relatively small percentage in both sessions (15.7% in Session II and 8.0% in Session I) prefer classes meeting two times a week. The largest percentage of Session II students (57.8%) prefer to meet 2 1/2 hours a class, 3 times a week. Only 16.4% prefer classes meeing for 1 1/2 hours, four or five times a week.

When Do They Prefer To Take Classes? The biggest difference in time preference occurs for evening classes. Almost two-fifths (38.4%) of Session II respondents prefer evening classes, compared to less than one-fifth (17.3%) of the Session I respondents. A very small percentage (less than two percent in both Sessions I and II), prefer classes before 8:00 AM or in the afternoon (1:00 to 4:00 PM). During the day, 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM is still the most popular time (36.7%), while 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM is second (22.9%). Approximately one-fifth in both sessions prefer Saturday classes, and slightly over ninety percent in both sessions reported that the course they were taking was *their first choice*.

Where Did They Learn About WCC Summer School? Among the things to be learned from this survey is to *keep the post cards and brochures coming*. In both sessions over a fourth of the students reported learning about WCC summer school from a WCC post card or a mailed brochure (26.6% in Session II; 28.9% in Session I). At the same time, another fourth reported learning about WCC summer school from *another student* (30.2% in Session II; 26.7% in Session I). Guidance counselors in high schools also should not be overlooked, since 12.3% in Session II and 15.7% in Session I reported learning about WCC summer school through them. Only six percent in both sessions learned about it from a college or high school newspaper.

This survey leaves little doubt that one of our best sources of future summer school enrollees is the students currently attending summer school. An even higher percentage of Session II respondents (55.6%) intend to take another WCC summer school course than Session I students (40.7%). In either case they deserve solicitation.

SESSION II
Summer School 1996

	On Campus	White Plains	Peekskill	Total
Total Session II Activities 1996	2,469	---	---	2,469*
Percent of Total Summer School Activities	--	--	--	32.5%
Number of Surveys Sent 6/19/96	974	---	---	974
Number of Surveys Returned and Useable	586	---	---	586
Return Rate	60.2%	---	---	60.2%
Total Session II Classes/Faculty 1996	109	---	---	109
Number of Packets Sent 6/19/96	40	---	---	40
Number of Packets Returned 7/10/96	28	---	---	28

*Total number of activities for the four summer school sessions combined is 7,606.